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THE DECLARATION
AGAINST
CATHOLIC DOCTRINES
WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE
CORONATION OATH
OF THE
BRITISH SOVEREIGN.



By REV. M. F. FALLON, O.M.I., D.D.

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HE Academic Hall of the University of Ottawa was crowded to the doors on the evening of the 16th of February, when the Rev. Father Fallon, O. M. I., delivered his lecture on the Declaration against certain Catholic Doctrines which is obligatory on the British Monarch on his accession to the throne.

Mr. E. P. Stanton, President of St. Joseph's Branch of the Catholic Truth Society, of Ottawa, was chairman of the meeting. Prominent among those present were, Hon. R. W. Scott, Secretary of State for Canada; W. J. Poupore, M. P.; Very Rev. J. Jodoin, Provincial of the Oblates in Canada; the Very Rev. Rector and Members of the Faculty of the University; P. Baskerville, ex-M.P.P.; W.L. Scott, Master in Chancery; ex-Mayor F. McDougal; J. J. McGee, Clerk of the Privy Council; F. J. McDougal, B. A.; L. J. Kehoe, B. A.; J. P. Smith, B. A.; and many more of the most prominent citizens of Canada's Capital. Letters regretting their inability to attend were received from His Grace the Arch-

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bishop of Ottawa; John A. MacCabe, LL. D., Principal of the Ottawa Normal School; Joseph Pope, Under Secretary of State for Canada; Simeon Lelievre, President of the Canadian Institute; and several others.

The Chairman introduced the reverend lecturer, who said:

MR. PRESIDENT, REV. FATHERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

"It is due to you to explain how it comes that the Catholic Truth Society of St. Joseph's Parish has taken up the question of the Coronation Oath and its accompanying objectionable Declaration against several fundamental Catholic doctrines. In ordinary circumstances, even that large liberty of initiative which, under our modern system of political government, is allowed for good or for ill to the humblest citizen, would scarcely justify the Catholic Truth Society or me in beginning or carrying on a crusade against a piece of imperial legislation that effects the person of the sovereign.

But there are, in this case, certain facts that explain and have suggested our present action. Some weeks ago in the course of a sermon which I preached in St. Joseph's Church, I referred to the Declaration against Transubstantiation, the Mass, and the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, that is required of every King or Queen that succeeds to the British throne. My reference on that occasion was a mere incident in my sermon, and I little imagined that it would ever be heard of again. This sermon was delivered on the 11th of December; on the 12th, the following cablegram appeared in several English newspapers:

EXCHANGE TELEGRAPH CO.'S CABLEGRAM:—Ottawa, Ontario, Monday.—Father Fallon, a Catholic preacher here, delivered a sermon yesterday which caused somewhat of a sensation. Dealing with the question of liberty of religions under the British flag, the preacher declared the Catholics of the Empire should do their best to have the Coronation Declaration removed from the Coronation Service on account of its containing portions stigmatizing the Mass as superstitious and idolatrous. Why, asked the preacher, should Queen Victoria have insulted her Catholic subjects, than whom none were more loyal, by taking that oath, and why should the Prince of Wales take such a pledge of his crown?"

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The next day saw a letter in the London "Daily Post," in which the writer used the following language :

" Father Fallon, of Canada, has touched a sore point in the Coronation Oath. Catholics have long held this oath in abhorrence. It matters little to them whether the monarch takes an oath or not ; their allegiance is stereotyped. But has Caesar no obligations ? If Catholics are expected to do homage to their ruler on his coronation day and after, surely they are not to be insulted by having dinned into their ears on such solemn occasion that their principal religious rite is superstitious and idolatrous ?

Canadians are justified in protesting against the terms of this oath, which not alone contains an insult to them, but to the six million Roman Catholics over whom the British Monarch exercises authority in these isles.

Non-conformists, Jews, Buddhists, Mahommedans, and every other class of religionists have their religious observances respected ; not so the Roman Catholic, whose sensitiveness is of no account, and whose religious opinions are in this fashion treated with insult. The Coronation Oath is an anachronism and it requires revision."

The London Tablet, of December 17th, contained a letter in which a lawyer of the Supreme Court of Judicature in England, wrote :

" I hope from the bottom of my heart that the question raised in Canada concerning the Coronation Oath will not be suffered to rest where it is. . . . Catholics should unite to remove by all legitimate and constitutional means those out-of-date provisions of the reign of William and Mary, the like of which no British statesman would dream of enacting in the year 1898 with reference to the religions of Buddha and Mahomet."

And the Liverpool Catholic Times, of the same date, reproduced the Ottawa cablegram with the following editorial comment:

" We think this declaration is permitted to remain because the Catholics of the Empire are too tolerant. If the Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland and Canada and the colonies declared with one voice that it must go, go it would."

Friends in Liverpool and Dublin sent me those papers, and then I felt it a duty to suggest further and organized action. The members of the Executive Committee of the Catholic Truth Society were unanimous in their decision to make an appeal to the public sense of justice and equality, in their effort to have blotted from the statute-books this abjuration by the monarch on a most striking occasion, and in terms most unnecessary and offensive, of the

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most sacred and most cherished doctrines of the Catholic Church. The coronation of a sovereign is, and ought to be, an impressive and sacred ceremony. It is more than a splendid spectacle; it is "a solemn recognition of the mutual obligations between the sovereign and the subjects, made in the presence of that Almighty Being by whom alone kings do reign." It is essentially, in its history and in itself, a religious service, and not a mere pageant of pomp or a mere show of song and tinsel. When God chose Saul to rule as first king over His own beloved people, the Jews, we are told in the Old Testament that "Samuel (the High Priest) took a vial of oil and poured it upon Saul's head and kissed him and said: Is it not because the Lord hath appointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?" And then "Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, and there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted and said, God save the King." (I Samuel X, 24.)

This custom of royal unction was peculiar to the Jewish people. "Nowhere else," says St. Augustine, "were kings anointed, than in that kingdom where Christ was foretold and whence He was to come." And this sacred ceremony seems to have descended to all Christian nations. At all Christian coronations we find that the religious element surpassed in importance everything else. Anointings and prayers, vigils and fasts, oaths and admonitions went to compose the ritual by which sovereignty was conferred upon the rightful heir.

And the history of Great Britain affords a remarkable confirmation of this assertion. Not until 597 A. D., did the great missionary St. Augustine, land upon the shores of England, bearing to the nation the blessings of the gospel of Christ. Yet in the pontifical of Archbishop Egbert, who died in 766 A. D., we find the following profession to be made by the sovereign:

I who, by the Providence of God, am about to be King, profess before God and His angels, that henceforth, according to my knowledge and power I will do and keep justice and peace to the Church of God, and to the people subject to me, with due regard to the mercy of God, according as I shall be able to ascertain by the council of my faithful (advisers)."

The royal declaration in the same pontifical of Egbert differs very markedly from the declaration of our days, as the following extract will amply demonstrate :

"It is the duty of a King newly ordained and enthroned to enjoin on the Christian people subject to him these three precepts : First, that the Church of God and all the Christian people preserve true peace at all times. Amen. Secondly, that he forbid rapacity and all iniquities to all degrees. Amen. Thirdly, that in all judgments he enjoin equity and mercy, that therefore the clement and merciful God, may grant us His mercy. Amen."

When William the Conqueror was crowned in 1066 A. D., by the Archbishop of York, the king standing before the altar in the presence of the whole people

"promised with an oath that he would, moreover, rule the whole people subject to him with righteousness and royal providence, would enact and hold fast right law, utterly forbid rapine and unrighteous judgments."

The oath taken by Edward II. in 1308, was in the form of question and answer :

"Sire, says the Archbishop, will you grant and keep, and by your oath confirm to the people of England, the laws and customs to them granted by the ancient kings of England, your righteous and godly predecessors; and especially the laws, customs and privileges granted to the clergy and people by the glorious king St. Edward, your predecessor ?

The king replies : I grant them and promise.

Sire, will you keep towards God and Holy Church, and to the clergy and people, peace and accord in God, entirely after your power ?

I will keep them.

Sire, will you cause to be done in all your judgments equal and right justice and discretion, in mercy and truth, to your power ?

I will do so.

Sire, do you grant to hold and to keep the laws and righteous customs which the community of your realm shall have chosen, and will you defend and strengthen them to the honor of God and to the utmost of your power ?

I grant and promise."

In the troublesome times that fell upon England after the so-called Reformation, it was inevitable that changes should occur in the coronation oath. Through the series of British monarchs from Henry VIII., in 1509, until after the revolution in 1688, when William and Mary replaced the dethroned and exiled King James II., constant efforts were not wanting to bring into accord

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the political and religious principles that prevailed in the kingdom. "Divers good laws," to use the parliamentary term, were made for preventing the increase and danger of popery. In 1643 the Puritans, in their struggle with Charles, made a declaration against certain Catholic doctrines. Under Charles II., in 1673, the Test Act was passed with the avowed object of debarring Catholics from all offices, both civil and military. By the terms of the Act of 1673, all officeholders were obliged to take the Oath of Supremacy, to subscribe the Declaration against transubstantiation, and to publicly receive the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. Of course no Catholic could comply with these provisions, and as a consequence Catholics were effectually kept out of office.

But these disabilities were not considered sufficient, and so in the year 1677, during the troubled reign of Charles II., the following act was passed to prevent Catholics from becoming members of Parliament :

"An Act for the more effectual preserving the King's Person and Government, by disabling papists from sitting in either house of Parliament."

"Forasmuch as divers good laws have been made for preventing the Increase and Danger of Popery in this Kingdom, which have not had the desired effects, by reason of the free access which popish recusants have had to His Majesty's court, and by reason of the liberty which of late some of the recusants have had and taken to sit and vote in Parliament.

"Wherefore, and for the safety of his majesty's royal person and Government be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and of the Commons, in this present Parliament assembled and by the Authority of the same, that, from and after the first day of December, which shall be in the Year of Our Lord God One thousand six hundred and seventy-eight, no Person that now is or hereafter shall be a Peer of this Realm or Member of the House of Peers shall vote, or make his proxy in the House of Peers or sit there during any Debate in the said House of Peers; nor any Person that now is, or hereafter shall be a Member of the House of Commons shall vote in the House of Commons or sit there during any debate in the said House of Commons after their Speaker is chosen; until such Peer or Member shall, from time to time respectively and in manner following, first take the several oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy and make, subscribe, and audibly repeat this Declaration following :

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"I, A.B., do solemnly, and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any Transubstantiation of the Elements of Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at or after the Consecration thereof by any Person whatsoever; and that the Invocation or Adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saints and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify and declare that I do make this Declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the Words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any Evasion, Equivocation, or Mental Reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope, or any other Authority or Person whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or Man, or absolved of this Declaration, or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons, or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the sin, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning."

So matters stood until the revolution of 1688, by which the principle of hereditary succession to the Crown of Great Britain was repudiated, and the supremacy of Parliament asserted by the calling of William Prince of Orange to the throne. Still a danger menaced the new order of things. James II., the exiled king, had a son whose right to the crown was quite as unimpeachable as that of his two sisters, Mary and Anne. But he was a Catholic. To shut him out forever from his rights, and at the same time to debar any Catholic from reaching the throne, the Declaration against Transubstantiation was made obligatory, in its most insulting form, on the sovereign, by the following piece of legislation, enacted in the year 1689:

"An Act declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, and Settling the Succession of the Crown."

"And that every King or Queen of this Realm who at any time hereafter shall come to and succeed in the Imperial Crown of this Kingdom, shall on the first day of the meeting of the first Parliament next after his or her coming to the Crown, sitting in his or her throne in the House of Peers, in the presence of the Lords and Commons therein assembled, or at his or her coronation, before such person or persons as shall administer the Coronation Oath to him or her at the time of his or her taking the said oath shall make, subscribe and audibly repeat the Declaration mentioned in the statute made in the 30th year of the reign of King Charles the Second, intituled:—

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"An Act for the more effectual preserving the King's person and Government, by disabling Papists from sitting in either House of Parliament."

"But if it shall happen that such King or Queen upon his or her succession to the Crown of this Realm, shall be under the age of 12 years then every such King or Queen shall make, subscribe and audibly repeat the said Declaration at his or her Coronation or on the first day of the meeting of the first Parliament as aforesaid, which shall first happen, after such King or Queen shall have attained the said age of 12 years.

Let me repeat the Declaration which this act forced and still forces upon the monarch of the world-wide, liberty-loving and civilization-promoting British Empire. It runs as follows :

"I, A.B., by the grace of God, King, (or Queen) of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, do solemnly and sincerely in presence of God, profess, testify, and declare, that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any Transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other Saint, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous. And I do solemnly in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare, that I do make this Declaration and each and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope, or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without any hope of any such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons, or power whatsoever, should dispense with or annul the same or declare that it was null and void from the beginning."

The first British sovereign to subscribe this shameful declaration was Queen Anne, on the 23rd of April, 1702. It has been repeated since successively by George I., II., III., and IV., and by William IV.

It was taken on the 20th of November, 1837, at the opening of her first parliament, by our present illustrious sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Victoria. The "Mirror of Parliament" (Vol. 1, page 11.) thus describes the event :

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"Soon after two o'clock, Her Majesty came down to the House, attended by the great officers of State, in the usual manner, and with the accustomed ceremony; and having ascended the throne, and desired their lordships to be seated, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod was instructed to command the attendance of the Commons at the bar of this House. On their arrival, Her Majesty made and subscribed the declaration against transubstantiation pursuant to the Bill of Rights."

Another authority tells us that,

"When the Queen had ascended the throne in the House of Lords, she directed the Lord Chancellor to read the declaration against transubstantiation, which she repeated after His Lordship sentence by sentence, very articulately, and with much feeling and solemnity."

It was indeed, an occasion calling for feeling and solemnity. I have no doubt that Her Majesty, then a tender young girl of eighteen years of age, must have felt profoundly humiliated at being obliged by law to brand a large, loyal and unoffending portion of her subjects as "superstitious and idolatrous."

I have tried to place clearly before you the history of this discreditable declaration. You have seen that it was first exacted from officeholders, both civil and military. No papist need apply. It was next extended so as to disable papists from sitting in either House of Parliament. It was finally made obligatory on the monarch. Such is the chronological genealogy of the declaration against Catholic doctrines; it has not a pedigree to be proud of.

Let me now briefly relate the efforts that have been made at different times for its abolition. This declaration remained in full vigor from 1689 until the election of Daniel O'Connell, in 1828, to represent Clare in the British House of Commons. Of course he could not take the Test Oath nor subscribe the Declaration against Transubstantiation; his seat was declared vacant, a new election was held, and O'Connell was again returned. The agitation that preceded, accompanied and followed these stirring events, resulted in what is called Catholic Emancipation in 1829. At that time this declaration and the oath of the Test Act were abolished for members of Parliament, and for almost all office-holders. From a few offices—such as the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, the Lord Chanceryship of England and of Ireland, and the chancellorships of the different universities—Catholics were still debarred.

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No further official appeal was heard from Catholics until 1866, although in 1837 the historian Lingard addressed a spirited protest to the Lord Chancellor on the occasion of Queen Victoria's taking the Declaration.

On the 20th March, 1866, Sir Colman O'Loughlin moved for leave to introduce into the British House of Commons a bill abolishing the Declaration in as far as it concerned the Lord Lieutenant and Lord Chancellor of Ireland. His motion was seconded by the Protestant Sir John Gray. In making his motion, Sir Colman O'Loughlin pointed out that the Lord Lieutenant was obliged to take the oath in the presence of members of the Irish Privy Council, many of whom were Catholics. That, he said, was manifestly an offensive proceeding, and he asked the House to abolish this relic of barbarism. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking for the Ministry of the day, admitted that "the words of the Declaration were of a very painful character," that "they had become unnecessary, and as they were now more likely to give pain than to serve any sensible purpose, it was impossible for the government to refuse its consent," to the introduction of Sir Colman O'Loughlin's bill.

The second reading came up on May 8th, 1866. In the course of the debate Mr. Cogan said :

"It was particularly offensive that the Lord Lieutenant should be obliged to make a declaration that the doctrines of Roman Catholics were idolatrous and superstitious. In the interest of peace and conciliation and Christian charity the Bill should receive the assent of the House."

The remarks of Mr. Chichester Fortescue were still stronger:

"This Declaration against Transubstantiation," he said, "was so utterly indefensible and devoid of foundation, that it required but the touch of any member of the House to make it fall to the ground. The only wonder was that officials should have so long been compelled on entering office to stigmatize in terms which amounted to nothing short of contempt, the sacred doctrines of the Church to which many gentlemen of the highest rank in the country adhered."

The bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on June 12th, 1866. Only four members voted against it; their names deserve recognition; only Messrs. Whiteside, Newdegate, Whalley and Chambers, amongst all the members of the Commons, were

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unable to suppress their religious prejudices, and vote for justice to Roman Catholics. It was introduced in the House of Lords and received its second reading on July 6. At that stage of the proceedings, however, the announcement was made that a commission was engaged on the general subject of oaths, and the bill was consequently withdrawn, pending the report of the commission. The decisions of the commission strongly favored the abolition of all these offensive oaths, declarations and tests, and on the 7th of February, 1867, Sir Colman O'Loughlin reintroduced his bill, but now, instead of applying to office-holders in Ireland alone, it was made to include all the subjects of Her Majesty. Little opposition was offered, and the measure received its third reading on the 14th of May. Lord Kimberly, who had once been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, undertook to pilot it through the Upper Chamber. In his speech he characterized the Declaration as "offensive and unnecessary."

"He had himself," he said, "been called to make that declaration before the Irish Privy Council, in the presence of a large number of persons of the Roman Catholic faith; and he must say that he had never in his life made a declaration with more pain than when he was required, before men holding high office, and for whom he had the greatest respect, to declare the tenets of their religion to be superstitious and idolatrous."

During the debate in the House of Lords two interesting statements were made, in view of our present discussion. Lord Derby remarked that

"The oath which the bill abolishes is *totidem verbis* the same as the one required to be taken by the sovereign at his or her coronation; and consequently the bill does open up a much larger question than at first sight it would appear to do."

And the Marquis of Bath thought that

"The bill would place the sovereign in an isolated and anomalous position, and it would behoove Parliament at some future time to consider whether the sovereign should not also be relieved from the necessity of this declaration."

The bill passed the House of Lords and received the Royal assent on July the 25th, 1867. Sir Colman O'Loughlin's bill was couched in the following terms :

"Whereas by various Acts a certain declaration, commonly called the Declaration against Transubstantiation and the Invocation

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of Saints, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as practised in the Church of Rome (and which declaration is more fully set forth in the schedule to this Act annexed), is recognized to be taken, made and subscribed by the subjects of Her Majesty, for the enjoyment of certain civil offices, franchises, and rights :

"And whereas it is expedient to alter the law in that respect, and to abolish the said declaration :

"Be it enacted by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, &c., as follows :

"1. From and after the passing of this Act, all such parts of the said Acts as require the said declaration to be taken, made, or subscribed by any of Her Majesty's subjects as a qualification for the exercise or enjoyment of any civil office, franchise, or right, shall be, and the same are hereby, repealed, and it shall not be obligatory for any person hereafter to take, make, or subscribe the said declaration as a qualification for the exercise or enjoyment of any civil office, franchise, or right within the realm.

"2. Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to enable any person professing the Roman Catholic religion to exercise or enjoy any civil office, franchise or right, for the exercise or enjoyment of which the taking, making, or subscribing the declaration, by this Act abolished, is now by law a necessary qualification, or any other civil office, franchise, or right from which he is now by law excluded."

Henceforth no British subject would be required to declare the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Invocation of the Saints and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Sacrifice of the Mass idolatrous and superstitious. But this highly objectionable oath must still be taken by the sovereign. Now, if it is offensive and unjust for Catholics to be termed idolatrous by the subjects of the Crown, and their own equals, the offensiveness and injustice are increased beyond endurance, when the charge is made by the sovereign and, on the most solemn occasion. Every argument used in favor of the abolition of the oath for office-holders makes with ten-fold force against its being taken by the supreme head of the state. You may ask what it is to which Catholics find objection in this portion of the coronation proceedings. The question scarcely needs an answer. Idolatry is the paying of divine homage to false gods; superstition is a belief in which ignorant or abnormal religious feeling is shown. Both are crimes against God and against human reason; yet of both these crimes

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are Catholics accused by the sovereign. Lord Macaulay, speaking of Brahmanism, says :

"As this superstition is of all superstitions the most irrational, and of all superstitions the most inelegant, so it is of all superstitions the most immoral."

Now, Brahmans exist in millions in India. Not only is their superstition not so stigmatized by the sovereign, or the sovereign's representatives, but the most scrupulous care is taken lest the Brahmanistic conscience should be in the least offended. No such regard is had for the beliefs of the oldest and most numerous body of Christians in the world.

And what are those Catholic doctrines which are especially pilloried by the Declaration? They are fundamental and characteristic articles of the Catholic creed. The Real Presence of Our Saviour in the Blessed Eucharist, the Catholic teaching regarding the Blessed Virgin and the Invocation of the Saints, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, are declared to be superstitious and idolatrous. I pass over with the mere mention the absurdity and the cruelty of anyone fixing such a shameful stigma on any religion, unless he or she have made the doctrines condemned the subject of careful study, and have become assured that foul play and misrepresentation and calumny have had no part in the condemnation. I pass over also the reasons of state which should preclude the very possibility of a great diplomatic personage, such as is the British sovereign, from giving needless, wanton and studied offence to the Catholic rulers and peoples of the world. I leave out a consideration the truth or falsity of the dogmas condemned. What matters it that we claim a basis in Scripture and in reason for our belief in Transubstantiation? Of what import is it that we pride ourselves on the eminent reasonableness of our veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints? What concern is it that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the centre and the soul of Catholic worship? These things were superstitious and idolatrous, in the prejudiced judgment of the English Parliament of the days of William and Mary; superstitious and idolatrous they must remain for Queen Victoria and her successors. And yet some of the choicest and subtlest intellects that the world has ever known, have accepted these beliefs and were prepared to sacrifice every-

thing for them. Lord Macaulay, writing of Transubstantiation, says :

"When we reflect that Sir Thomas More was ready to die for the doctrine of Transubstantiation, we cannot but feel some doubt whether the doctrine of Transubstantiation may not triumph over all opposition. More was a man of eminent talents. He had all the information on the subject that we have, or that, while the world lasts, any human being will have. . . . We are, therefore, unable to understand why what Sir Thomas More believed respecting Transubstantiation may not be believed to the end of time by men equal in abilities to Sir Thomas More. But Sir Thomas More is one of the choice specimens of human wisdom and virtue."

And John Henry Newman—certainly no weak-minded idolater—writes as follows regarding the Mass :

"I declare that to me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming as the Mass. I could attend Masses forever and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words—it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the evocation of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before whom angels bow and devils tremble. . . . There are little children there, and old men, and simple laborers, and students in seminaries, priests preparing for Mass, priests making their thanksgiving; there are innocent maidens, and there are penitent sinners; but out of these many minds rises one Eucharistic hymn, and the great action is the measure and the scope of it."

And there are even Englishmen who did not fear, on the occasion of the accession of Queen Victoria, to speak out their minds plainly, as the following extract from a letter written by Charles Waterton on June 15th, 1838, will amply prove :

"Who could suppose," he says, "that, in these times of intense religious investigation, we should ever see a British Queen forced, by an execrable Act of Parliament, to step forward and swear that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, at which Alfred the Great, St. Edward the Confessor, and millions upon millions, not only of Englishmen, but of all nations, both before and since their time, have kneeled and do kneel in fervent adoration, is superstitious and idolatrous? . . . Had I been near her sacred person, the sun should not have set before I had imparted to her royal ear, a true and faithful account of that abominable oath. It is a satire on the times; it is a disgrace to the British nation; it ought to be destroyed by the hand of the common hangman."

And, indeed, reasonable men may well inquire what good purpose is served by this declaration. It is insulting, and at variance with the first principles of common politeness, and is therefore scarcely a fitting expression to fall from the lips of the sovereign. Besides condemning Catholic belief, it perpetuates the ancient and exceedingly offensive falsehood, that the Pope can dispense with the truth and permit evasion, equivocation or mental reservation, and it makes the entirely gratuitous assumption that English Protestants have a monopoly of the use of words according to their plain and evident meaning :

"And I," says the sovereign, "do solemnly in the presence of God profess, testify and declare that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope or any other authority or person whatsoever."

Now, is there anything unreasonable in Catholics moving to have this Declaration abolished? Why should this continual and groundless suspicion be kept alive against us? When we ask for absolute religious equality with all other citizens of the empire, are we making an exorbitant demand? We are not seeking special favors. Our request is that Catholic doctrines, held sacred by us, should not be made the object of royal condemnation and shameful insult. The sovereign of the British empire rules a mixed people, and no offensive word should pass the royal lips regarding even the humblest and most insignificant subject. We ask Protestants to deal with us in this matter as they should wish us to deal with them in similar circumstances. And in referring to Protestants, it may be of importance to point out to them that the Declaration to which we object is not the coronation oath itself, but something quite independent of, and much subsequent to, the coronation oath. We are in no sense asking for the abolition of the oath by which the sovereign swears to maintain the Protestant religion by law established, nor are we attempting to interfere with the provision of the Bill of Rights which enacts that the sovereign must be a Protestant. Our concern is solely with that Declaration which attaches to our religious beliefs epithets so offensive and so unjust that we can scarcely be expected to remain

quiet under them. It will be remarked that Sir Colman O'Loughlin's bill contained a clause which provided that nothing in the Act should be taken to make Catholics eligible for any office for which they were theretofore ineligible. It must be evident, then, that the repeal of the Declaration against Transubstantiation could in no way prejudicially affect either the Protestant religion or the Protestant succession to the British crown.

You may say, Why should this matter be agitated in Canada? I ask in reply, Why should it not be agitated in Canada? Is not Canada a part, and a very important part, of the British empire? And do not Catholics form 42 per cent. of the population of this Dominion? Is it credible that the religious doctrines and beliefs of 42 per cent. of Britain's premier colony shall ever again be stigmatized as idolatrous and superstitious? Is it possible that the memory of those Catholics who worked so strenuously and so successfully in the past for the upbuilding of our Canada shall have no effect in softening prejudices and removing offence? Do the services of a Cartier and a Taché, a McGee and a Thompson count for nothing in the counsels and plans of Great Britain? Or can it be that marked regard will not be paid to the respectful representations of a portion of the empire whose Prime Minister, Minister of Public Works, Secretary of State, and Solicitor-General are personally affected by the objectionable Declaration against Transubstantiation?

It would seem to be our plain duty, for the interests of our religion and our honor, to do our best to remove forever from the statute-books of an empire, whose best interests we are always ready to serve, this last remnant of bitter and barbarous times.

This is not a national question; it is not a religious question; it is a matter of public policy; a request for simple justice; a plea for equal rights and for the exercise of that fair play and broad toleration which, Mr. Balfour asserts, characterize British institutions.

Unless this Declaration is abolished, let me picture for you what will happen at the next coronation. Gathered around the new king will be representatives from all parts of the empire—from the British Isles, from Asia and Africa, from Australia and from the British possessions of America. Men of every color and

race and speech, of every shade of religious opinion, will be present on that momentous occasion to offer the tribute of their loyalty and the assurance of their affection to the newly-crowned monarch. And from the lips of the sovereign shall come no word of reproach or rebuke for the followers of Buddha and Brahma, for the worshippers of Vishnu and Siva, for the Kaffirs or the Bushmen, the Hottentots, the Zulus or the disciples of Mahomet. There shall be nothing but kindness and conciliation for Jew and Gentile, for Anglican and Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian. For one class alone of British subjects will there be reserved scorn and contempt, insult and outrage. The twelve millions of Roman Catholics in the British empire will have the sad privilege of knowing that, in the presence of God and before the wide world, their king solemnly pronounced their religious beliefs to be idolatrous and superstitious. It will not matter that these shameful words are uttered in the presence of forty-nine Catholic Lords, of fifty-five Catholic Baronets, of nineteen Catholic Privy Councillors, and of seventy-two Catholic members of the House of Commons. Ready, as they would be, to swear fealty and pledge allegiance, prepared to draw their swords if need be, and never to sheathe them so long as their services were required by the sovereign, is it surprising if the ardor of their patriotism should be somewhat cooled and the affection of their loyalty rather shocked, as they heard, one by one, the distinctive doctrines of their religion declared by the supreme civil ruler to be idolatrous and superstitious?

The Catholic Duke of Norfolk, Postmaster-General of Great Britain and Earl Marshal of the Empire, upon whom devolves the duty of making all preparations for coronation, would receive his reward in the assurance that Transubstantiation, in which he believes, is an abomination. The Catholic Marquis of Ripon, who for years ruled with signal success Her Majesty's Indian empire, would be told that his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and his invocation of the saints were superstitious. The Catholic Lord Cromer, whose brilliant diplomatic ability and keen foresight prepared the way for the re-conquest of the Soudan, must not wince or move a muscle as he heard that the Sacrifice of the Mass was idolatry. And the Catholic Lord Chief Justice

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Russell, the pride of the legal profession in England, would learn, doubtless much to his annoyance, that the Pope can sanction departures from truth, and permit evasion, equivocation and mental reservation.

Now it will scarcely be denied that this is an intolerable state of affairs. No other people would be expected to remain silent under such hideous charges. Of the loyalty of Catholics there is not, and cannot be, a doubt. They have always contributed quite their proportionate share, both in intellectual and political services, towards the building up of that power to which, in the picturesque declaration of Daniel Webster, "ancient Rome in the height of her glory is not to be compared ; a power which has dotted over the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

Its Catholic citizens have a stake in the security, the progress and the prosperity of that great empire. They hope for the continued triumph of that flag which is known and respected throughout the world. But it is idle to seek to conceal the fact that the enemies of the British empire are numerous and powerful. The day will certainly come when these foes will make an onset on the empire, the outcome of which will be either its signal triumph or its utter downfall. Against that inevitable event is it not wise to make every provision? What folly to wound the most delicate sensibilities of millions of subjects, to make them feel that they are citizens of an empire that does not value their services, and would not appreciate their devotion, since it has no regard for their conscientious convictions !

It is in this sense, chiefly, that the Catholic Truth Society of St. Joseph's parish purposes taking action looking to the abolition of the Declaration against Transubstantiation and other Catholic doctrines. This is not a factious agitation gotten up by men who seek to promote their own interests by a specious appeal to the baser passions and prejudices. It is a calm but firm protest against injustice ; it is the humble but sincere request of those who feel that they are wrongly condemned, to have that condemnation removed ; it is the expression of their intention to carry

their request before Parliament, and even to the foot of the Throne, in the certain hope and conviction that gentleness and honor, justice and the rights of conscience will ultimately prevail."

At the close of the lecture the following resolution was moved by Mr. B. B. Sulte, F.R.S.C., the well-known Canadian historian, and seconded by Mr. M. J. Gorman, LL.B. :

"That the Roman Catholics of Ottawa, as loyal subjects of the British empire, desire to express their regret that there should be required of the sovereign of the empire, at coronation or at any other time, a declaration against Transubstantiation, by which the Sacrifice of the Mass and other doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church are stigmatized as superstitious and idolatrous ;

"That they sincerely trust that the spirit of broad toleration which, within the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty and the two preceding sovereigns removed this declaration from the statute-books, so far as members of Parliament, peers of the realm, and office holders are concerned, will, at the request of humble but dutiful subjects of the empire, cause it to be repealed in so far as it relates to the supreme head of the state ;

"That they believe that the removal of this objectionable declaration would enable the Roman Catholics of the empire to enter with more profound feelings of loyal affection into the spirit of a ceremony which should be the occasion of nothing but mutual esteem and good will on the part of both sovereign and subjects."

In speaking to his resolution, Mr. Sulte said that the mere fact that this Declaration was a relic of barbarism should justify its abolition, and in that sense he could add nothing to what had been said by the Rev. Father Fallon. But, before proposing the resolution, he would like to draw the attention of the audience to one or two historical facts. Canadians would recall with deep regret the series of sad events that occurred in Nova Scotia between 1713 and 1755, and which resulted in the expulsion of the unfortunate Acadians. That people had suffered great injustice. The poetic recital of their trials in Longfellow's *Evangeline* elicits our heartfelt sympathy with them. But the poet fails to point out what was the real cause of their misfortunes. It was nothing else than the Test Oath and this very Declaration against Catholic doctrines. The Acadians were an industrious people; they wished to be a loyal people; but they would not be a people of apostates to their faith. They refused to take the Test Oath, the objection-

able Oath of Allegiance, and the Declaration. In consequence, they were driven from their homes and made wanderers on the face of the earth.

A similar difficulty faced the French Canadians at the time of the conquest of Canada and its cession to Great Britain. History was about to repeat itself, for the French Canadians would never have taken the oath declaring the falsity of their religion. But, happily for all concerned, the support of Canadians was vital to Great Britain in her disputes and struggles with the American colonies, and, from motives of policy, the British Administration of the day refrained from exacting the objectionable oaths from the new subjects. Hence no poet has been called upon to chronicle the dispersion and wanderings of the French Canadian people. Wisdom inspired the Ministers of the Crown on that occasion. Let us trust that it may do so again. He hoped that this resolution would go around the world and be heard of at an early day in its proper place at Westminster Palace, supported by the unanimous voice of the British Parliament.

Mr. Gorman, in seconding the resolution, referred to the great debt of gratitude which all Catholics owed to Rev. Dr. Fallon, for the masterly and exhaustive manner in which he had dealt with this question. There had, he continued, been some misconception as to the object of this movement, owing to the fact that some of the newspapers had referred to it as being aimed against the Coronation Oath of the Sovereign. This misconception it was necessary to completely remove, and he therefore thought it well to strongly emphasize the fact that the movement had no such object. There was no desire to interfere with the Act of Settlement, by which the British Crown must necessarily descend to a Protestant, nor with the Coronation Oath, in which the Sovereign swears to maintain "the Protestant reformed religion established by law." The Declaration which was attacked, was an entirely collateral matter, and was wholly unnecessary to protect the one or to maintain the other. He concluded by expressing the conviction that this movement, now modestly inaugurated by the Catholic Truth Society here, would gather force from all parts of the empire, and would result in the repeal of this objectionable declaration before the next sovereign ascended the throne.

The resolution was put to the audience by the chairman, Mr. E. P. Stanton, and was unanimously adopted amidst much applause. The meeting closed with the National Anthem, *God Save the Queen*.

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